
IR-4 Highlights (Partner Outreach)

Editor's Note: IR-4 Highlights by the Executive Director is an outreach feature of the Newsletter, focused primarily on articles in this issue.

Our final accounting for 2000 clearances exceeded the preliminary numbers published in our Winter Newsletter issue. The food use clearance total including Section 18's was 511, or twice our previous record of 255 in 1999, and compared to our pre-FQPA average of 100 clearances from 1984 to 1996, is a real achievement and one the entire program can be proud of. The ornamental clearances also reached a record 1,156 versus the previous record of 851 in 1996. Again, something to celebrate. We nearly matched the 1999 total of 58 biopesticide clearances with 56 in 2000.

This high level of achievement is not by accident and reflects the hard work and dedication by the entire IR-4 Team. Our Field Research Directors put out nearly 700 field residue trials last year and an additional 600 plus ornamental trials. In addition, the Field Research Directors worked hard to keep up with the Field Data Books (FDB's) as part of our 30-month completion goal. The Regional Field Coordinators accomplished their goal of placing the aggressive field trial program and providing quality control for the FDB's. Our Regional Laboratory Coordinators and Chemists have become the envy of the entire program with their analytical expertise and efficiency. They were able to complete the analytical portions of most studies ahead of schedule. Our Quality Assurance Unit (Regional and Headquarters) continues to do a fine job in assuring GLP compliance at all stages of our studies. This is critical to continuing our high level of petition credibility with our EPA regulatory partners. The fact that IR-4 has passed 32 EPA audits of our field research stations and analytical laboratories the past 5 years is a testament to their dedication and the entire program's commitment to quality. The Study Directors deserve special credit for overseeing all phases of the studies and preparing the petitions for EPA submission. These fine professionals have no equivalents in the crop protection industry and are a hybrid of Product Development and Registration Managers who know all phases of their job and the products they work with.

The crop protection industry continues to provide IR-4 with the newest chemistries and biologicals for us to develop and register on minor crops. Consolidation continues to be the key trend for this industry. After having 6 of the top 10 worldwide crop protection companies merge in 2000, we are off to a fast start so far in 2001 with Dow AgroSciences

announcing the purchase of Rohm & Haas' crop protection division and biopesticide companies Auxein and MycoTech merging to form Emerald BioAgricultural Corporation. It is a credit to these and all the other companies we work with to continue their minor crop initiatives with IR-4. We will continue to maintain our senior management and regulatory/technical contacts with all of our crop protection company partners this year to solicit their new chemistries and biopesticides for IR-4 programs.

I cannot say enough about our regulatory partnerships which grow and evolve as we investigate new and innovative ways to more efficiently have IR-4 minor crop petitions reviewed for approval. The EPA staff constantly is open to dialogue on new procedures. The sabbatical last year by Sidney Jackson on the Registration Division Team and the IR-4 program (Southern Region, Food Use Workshop, National Research Planning Meeting and Headquarters) has been expanded this year with Dan Kunkel, Registrations Manager, spending one week a month at EPA's offices. California's Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) has become a new and highly valuable partner in developing an IR-4 petition work share program with the EPA which will result in their conducting residue chemistry assessments on 30 petitions this year after completing a pilot project last year. In addition, our Canadian Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) partners have been participating, as have our California DPR partners, in the quarterly EPA/IR-4 Technical Working Group Meetings via teleconferences and are close to initiating an IR-4 petition workshare pilot project with the EPA this year. These programs leverage the regulatory resources of the EPA, California DPR and PMRA to maximize output (petitions) and minimize duplication. The real winners are minor crop growers who will benefit from more food use clearances this year and in future years.

Our Methyl Bromide Alternatives Program under the capable leadership of Jack Norton is entering its third year with a great deal of momentum. The 1999/2000 results from the Florida and California Strawberry Program have been published in the last two Newsletters. The data from the 2000 Tomato Program are being summarized for printing. The 2000/2001 Strawberry Program is underway in Florida and California. IR-4 has been able to facilitate a Telone plus Herbicide Program for southeastern tomatoes, strawberries and vegetable crops with monetary support from the IR-4 portion of our ARS program and from the ARS Methyl Bromide Alternatives National Program. Many thanks to Ken Vick, ARS Methyl Bromide Alternatives National Program Leader, for his support for our program and his leadership, along with Pete Caulkins, Deputy Director of the EPA Registration Division, of the Methyl Bromide Alternatives Working

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Group which is providing national oversight for this important minor crop need. We are fortunate to have Jack as a member of this Working Group to represent minor crop interests and concerns.

The IR-4 Biopesticide Program also deserves special recognition. Bill Biehn has provided leadership for this program the past 5 years and has seen the competitive grant research program evolve from supporting early stage research projects to almost a complete focus on an advanced stage program. In 2001, over 90% of our \$300,000 research budget will fund projects with products which are nearing commercialization or are already on the market but need additional efficacy data for minor crop labels or state recommendations. We have developed a strong partnership with the Biopesticide Industry Alliance (BPIA), the trade association made up of companies dedicated to providing high quality biopesticide products. IR-4 is quite encouraged by the efficacy data we have seen from our Biopesticide Research Program over the past 3 or 4 years, and encourages our university researchers and growers to evaluate these exciting new products in their IPM and resistance management programs. For a list of the 2001 projects funded, please refer to Bill's article on page 13.

Finally, I would like to recognize the fine Headquarters staff for their outreach efforts in 2000. The Newsletter you are reading is a fine example of this initiative because of its recognition by the State Agricultural Experiment Station Newsletter Award and its increased 37% circulation the last two years. Kudos' to Professor Markle and his dedication as its Editor! Our Headquarters staff also had 33 papers, articles and book chapters accepted for publishing and/or were published. In addition, staffers wrote 34 meeting and trip reports and gave 59 presentations to various commodity groups, professional societies and conferences. Our web site, managed by Jerry Baron, is becoming a quality reference for the program as is Jerry's New Products/Transitional Solution List which is the best public information on new chemistries and biopesticides for minor crops.

All that said, we certainly cannot rest on our laurels. IR-4 has a real challenge to meet and exceed our 2000 accomplishments in 2001. If I know the IR-4 Team, we are all up to the task!

Article by Bob Holm

IR-4 Headquarters Presentations for Spring 2001 Newsletter

Bob Holm - "Challenges and Opportunities for the IR-4 Program in a New Century" given to Western Region IR-4 Team (1/8), California Department of Pesticide Regulation (1/8), Valent U.S.A. Corporation (1/9), Tomen Agro (1/9), Western Plant Growth Regulatory Society (1/10), AgraQuest (1/11), Uniroyal Chemical (1/25), New Jersey Agriculture Leadership Conference (2/7), FMC (2/12), Congressional Staff Luncheon (2/26), North American Blueberry Council (3/6), University of Arizona Agricultural Experiment Station (3/7), Gowan Company (3/8), Michigan IR-4 Minor Crop Meeting (3/21) and Emerald BioAgriculture (3/21)